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PP RUEHQU
DE RUEHPU #1552 2341614
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 221614Z AUG 06
FM AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3857
INFO RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC PRIORITY
RUCPDOG/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEHZH/HAITI COLLECTIVE
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 1191
RUEHSA/AMEMBASSY PRETORIA 1033
RUEHQU/AMCONSUL QUEBEC 0560
RUMIAAA/HQ USSOUTHCOM J2 MIAMI FL
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 0980

UNCLAS PORT AU PRINCE 001552

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE
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STATE FOR WHA/CAR
EB.IFD; EB/BTA
S/CRS
SOUTHCOM ALSO FOR POLAD
STATE PASS AID FOR LAC/CAR
INR/IAA (BEN-YEHUDA)
WHA/EX PLEASE PASS USOAS
COMMERCE FOR SCOTT SMITH
TREASURY FOR JEFF LEVINE

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [ECON](#) [EAID](#) [PGOV](#) [PINS](#) [HA](#)
SUBJECT: BORDER CROSSING WITH DR STILL CLOSED

REF: A. PAP 1417
[1](#)B. PAP 1543

[1](#)1. This message is sensitive but unclassified) please protect accordingly.

[1](#)2. (SBU) Presidential advisor Robert Manuel on August 19 told the Ambassador that the situation at the Malpasse border crossing, the nearest to the Dominican Republic from Port-au-Prince, had become intolerable, and that the GoH would take steps within days to re-take control of the border crossing from striking truck drivers. The strikers, are demanding the removal of Customs Director Jeantal Clervil who, since his appointment, has moved to collect lawful customs duties of imported goods (reftel). Although the government has increased the personal security of Clervil, it has otherwise until now failed to take firm steps to impose order since the strike began on July 10. Manuel said that the GoH would dispatch Haitian agents (presumably HNP, including some special units), rather than MINUSTAH forces.

[1](#)3. (SBU) Dominican Ambassador to Haiti Jose Serulle Ramira insisted to the Ambassador that the media had misquoted remarks attributed to him on August 17 that Dominican authorities had officially closed the border crossing. Foreign Minister Jean Renald Clerisme confirmed to the Ambassador on August 18 that although the border remained officially open on both sides, the strikers continued to effectively block all commercial traffic.

[1](#)4. (U) At an AMCHAM meeting on August 16, an AMCHAM member told poloff that she had tried to cross the border over the weekend in order to take her son to school in Santa Domingo. However, individuals in Fonds-Parisien, a neighboring border town, attacked her car with bottles and rocks and she was forced to turn around. However, she stressed (and was supported by her other AMCHAM colleagues) that she supported Clervil and thought that the executive should not give in to the strikers' request to remove the newly-hired Clervil.

[1](#)5. (SBU) Comment: As noted in reftel, despite the capital

city's pre-occupation with gang violence the border impasse represents an equally serious long-term threat to the GoH's ability to establish functional governance countrywide, in addition to critical customs revenue the GoH loses each day the border remains impassable. Government inaction thus far looks to be additional evidence that the Preval government has difficulty in dealing with more than one priority at a time. Now that the GoH appears to have settled on a gang policy (ref B), we will see if the GoH can turn its attention and follow-up on Manuel's tough talk. End Comment.

SANDERSON